

**JOINT STAFF REPORT
WINTER FACT SHEET NO. 4
Columbia River Compact
March 2, 2001**

Purpose: To review salmon, steelhead, sturgeon, and smelt stock status and consider ongoing commercial fishing seasons for salmon and smelt in the mainstem Columbia River.

TAC: This Fact Sheet was distributed to the TAC on March 2, 2001.

2001 MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES

- The Columbia River Fish Management Plan (CRFMP) expired on July 31, 1999, and the parties to *United States versus Oregon* are continuing re-negotiation discussions initiated in 1998.
- The states of Washington and Oregon, the four Columbia River treaty tribes, and the federal government have reached a tentative agreement for 2001 winter, spring, and summer fisheries.

Endangered Species Act (ESA)

- A Management Agreement is being drafted for spring chinook, summer chinook, and sockeye that includes a spring chinook harvest rate schedule for the next five years plus other elements for three years.
- The Management Agreement will include a conservation-based harvest schedule and will also include agreed-to production actions.
- The *United States versus Oregon* parties will work to renew a long term Columbia River Fish Management Plan over the next three years.
- Non-Indian fisheries for 2001 will be managed not to exceed a 2% impact rate on upriver spring chinook.
- At the February 20, 2001 hearing the Compact gave guidance concerning allocation of upriver spring chinook impacts for non-Indian fisheries.

<i>Compact Guidance Concerning Non-Indian Fishery Impacts For Upriver Spring Chinook</i>	
Fishery	Impact Rate
Winter Season Commercial Fishery	0.5%
Spring Commercial Tooth Net Study	0.4%
Mainstem Sport Fishery	0.8%
Other Non-Target Fisheries	0.3%

- Impacts on wild Willamette spring chinook are allocated 6-7% for the winter commercial fishery and about 0.7% for the mainstem sport fishery.
- Treaty Indian fisheries will be managed for a 13% impact rate on upriver spring chinook.

NON-INDIAN FISHERIES

Smelt Fisheries

- Ongoing fisheries are being managed in accordance with the draft Joint State Management Plan which sets forth three fishing levels depending on relative annual abundance.
- A Level 1 commercial smelt fishery in the mainstem Columbia River was adopted at the December 18, 2000 Compact hearing.
- The adopted fishery consists of one 18-hour fishing period per week (3 AM-9 PM Wednesdays) and is scheduled to occur during January 1 - March 31, 2001.
- Migration conditions have been good with water temperatures exceeding 40°F since December 1, 2000.
- The Columbia River is unusually low and clear for this time of year with flow at Bonneville Dam exceeding 150 kcfs only twice since January 1, 2001. During the last half of January and early February visibility at Tongue Point ranged between 50" and 97" and generally equaled or exceeded 5' at Bonneville Dam.
- Through the end of January effort and catch was very low.
- During the February 7, 14, and 21 fishing periods catch rates increased dramatically with the CPUE's ranging between 900 and 2,000. The vast majority of the catch occurred below Cathlamet.
- During the February 28 fishing period landings increased to 61,000 pounds. Gill net effort was down but trawl landings increased significantly which resulted in an extremely high CPUE of 3,600 pounds delivery.
- To date a total of 173,000 pounds of smelt have been landed in the mainstem Columbia River which represents the largest mainstem landing total since 1985.
- Washington tributaries are closed for commercial smelt fishing except for the Cowlitz River which is currently open for one 12-hour fishing period (3 PM Tuesday–3 AM Wednesday) during January 1 – March 31, 2001. Effort and catch have been very low to date.
- The Cowlitz River is also open to sport smelt fishing from 6 AM to 10 PM Saturdays during January 1-March 31, 2001. Effort and catch was very low prior to February 10. Effort increased during the February 10-24 fishing periods but no catch was observed.
- Based on observations by the WDFW it was determined that smelt entered the Cowlitz River on Wednesday February 28.

Winter Commercial Salmon Season

- At the February 20, 2001 Compact hearing the following winter salmon fishing periods were adopted.

	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
F		Noon	6 PM		Noon	6 PM	
E		██████████			██████████		
B	25	26	27	28	1	2	3
M							
A							
R	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

- An estimated 1,164 chinook and 108 white sturgeon were landed during the first fishing period.
- During the first fishing period an estimated 18% of the catch were of upriver origin which is less than the preseason expectation of 23%.
- Winter season landings to date have totaled 1,223 chinook and 2,827 white sturgeon.
- Based on VSI analysis and CWT recoveries impacts to listed species through February 27 are estimated to be 0.06% on Snake River and upriver Columbia River wild stocks and 1.43% on wild Willamette spring chinook.
- Catch during the second fishing period is not expected to exceed 1,000 spring chinook.

<i>Joint Staff Recommendation</i>	
Adopt the following salmon fishing periods for the mainstem Columbia River:	
Season:	6 PM Sunday March 4 to 6 AM Tuesday March 6 (36 hours)
Area:	Mouth to Kelley Point (in effect since 1975).
Sanctuaries:	Grays River, Elokomin-A, Abernathy Creek, Cowlitz River, Kalama-A, and Lewis-A sanctuaries are in place.
Gear:	8" minimum and 9¾" maximum mesh size restrictions.
Allowable Sales:	Salmon and sturgeon.
Expected Catch:	2,000-4,000 spring chinook 200 white sturgeon
Expected Impacts:	0.18-0.36 Upriver Wild 2.13-4.26 Willamette River wild

- Allows access to spring chinook destined for the Willamette River while limiting impacts on upriver spring chinook.
- 36-hour fishing period allows significant progress toward catch guidelines as early as possible to limit impacts on upriver stocks.
- Sunday night opening reduces possibility of exceeding upriver impact limits.
- Tuesday Compact allows for fishery opening on Tuesday night to continue progress towards catch guideline.
- 8-inch minimum mesh size will effectively target spring chinook and limit impacts on listed steelhead.
- Impacts to listed species expected to remain within guidelines set forth in the 2001 Management Agreement and the Willamette Spring Chinook FMEP.

Select Area Commercial Winter Seasons

At the January 25, 2001 Compact hearing the following winter seasons were adopted for Youngs Bay, Tongue Point, and Blind Slough.

	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	
F E B	18	19   	20   				22	24
	25	26   	27   				2	3
M A R	4	5   	6   				9	10

-  Youngs Bay Noon Wednesday to 6 PM Friday
-  Blind Slough 7 PM Monday to 7 AM Tuesday
-  Tongue Point 7PM Tuesday to 7 AM Wednesday

- Spring chinook catches to date are estimated to be 178 in Youngs Bay, 76 in Tongue point, and 10 in Blind Slough.
- Through March 1 an estimated 5 white sturgeon have been landed in Select Area fisheries.

Mainstem Spring Chinook Sport Fishery

- At the February 20, 2001 hearing the Compact adopted a selective sport fishery for March 12 through April 30.
- Additionally, the Compact requested that the Joint Staff develop a fishery management schedule for the first half of April.

<i>Joint Staff Recommendation</i>
✓ Fishery check points to occur on Tuesday April 3, Friday April 6, Tuesday April 10, and Friday April 13 for the purpose of tracking impacts to upper Columbia wild spring chinook.
✓ Based on results of the fishery checkpoints a Joint State hearing may be required that day to modify ongoing sport fishery.

TREATY INDIAN FISHERIES

Treaty Indian Winter Gillnet Season

- At the January 25, 2001 Compact hearing a winter gillnet season during February 1 - March 21, 2001 was adopted.
- During the first four weeks of this fishery an estimated 702 white sturgeon, 45 steelhead, and 28 walleye were landed.
- Including setline landings, a total of 737 white sturgeon have been landed to date which is similar to catches observed during 1997-2000.
- To date pool specific white sturgeon catch estimates are 121 in Bonneville Pool (1,300 catch guideline), 519 in The Dalles Pool (1,100 catch guideline), and 97 in the John Day Pool (1,160 catch guideline).

NEXT COMPACT HEARING

- The Joint Staff recommends that the next Compact hearing be scheduled for 11 AM Tuesday March 6, 2001 at the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife headquarters Commission room, 2501 SW First Avenue, Portland, Oregon to review ongoing commercial seasons.

Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife
Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
March 2, 2001